

Authors' Response to:

Review of Paulozzi, LJ, et al, "Lack of Evidence that Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs Decrease Deaths from Opioid Overdose"

By Lesley Curtis

Are the study objectives clearly stated and appropriate? (Yes, No, Unsure) Why?

Yes, study objectives are clear although I would advise against using causal language in the statement of the objective. Given the study design and available data, it would be more accurately stated as, "To quantify the relation (or association between) PDMPs and rates of death..."

Is the overall study design appropriate for the study objectives? (Yes, No, Unsure) Why?

Yes

Are the methods and analysis plan appropriate for the study objectives? (Yes, No, Unsure) Why?

Generally, yes. I agree with the previous reviewer that the author will likely need to explain the schedule of controlled substances. In addition, the definition of "proactive" PDMPs seems subjective. A better rationale for the definition should be provided.

Were the data analyzed in such a way to address the objectives of the study appropriately? (Yes, No, Unsure) Why?

Generally, yes. What does the term "geographically lagged" mean? Depending on the target journal, this paragraph on p.8 may need to be expanded and written more clearly. Autocorrelation, for example, is not a term typically used in medical journals.

Are the study results presented and interpreted appropriately and completely? (Yes, No, Unsure) Why?

Yes

Are the study conclusions, policy implications, and recommendations appropriate and complete? (Yes, No, Unsure) Why?

Is there reason to expect that PDMPs would reduce drug overdose deaths? The link between PDMPs and drug abuse/addiction seems clearer. Couldn't a patient overdose on a single prescription of many of the drugs being examined? It would be helpful to make the link between PDMPs and overdose more clearly for the reader.

Additional comments tracked in the text of paper:

Page 3 (Abstract): Avoid the use of causal language. Increases from when or relative to what? How much variability is there in overdose-related deaths at the state level?

Page 4 (Methods): What is the N for the analysis?

Page 7: What are the total MME and MME by drug type?:

Page 9: “There needs to be a table that summarizes the key variables of interest in the study sample. Graphs are not sufficient.”

Page 11: “It would be helpful to describe the variation in the implementation of PDMPs earlier. “

Page 12: Why weren’t special forms among the a priori hypotheses?

Page 13: Comment re studying states before and after PDMP implementation.